

PLANNING AHEAD

Notes for the Planning Community

Volume 2, Issue 1

January 1999

In This Issue

NOTES FROM JIM JOHNSON	1
A WORD FROM THE EDITOR.....	2
BUILDING ON PROPERTY ACQUIRED THROUGH FEMA'S HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM	2
58TH EAB MEETING.....	3
NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE	3
NAVIGATION DATA BECOMES ACCESSIBLE.	4
CLEAN WATER ACTION PLAN--UNIFIED WATERSHED ASSESSMENTS	4
CLEAN WATER ACTION PLAN--FEDERAL COORDINATION TEAMS	5
SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE.....	5

Notes from Jim Johnson

In the October Newsletter, I briefly described the five mission objectives that will support development of a strong, responsive and highly respected civil works program. Over the next several months, I will describe what we hope to accomplish in achieving each of these objectives. In this issue, I would like to address improving planning outputs. A healthy civil works planning program is essential to the Corps of Engineers role as a problem solving organization as well as to

maintaining a strong civil works capability and program. While these responsibilities are shared within and among civil works teams in districts, divisions and headquarters, planning is at the core of our success.

Successful water resource and environmental problem solving is largely a field responsibility except perhaps when issues broaden to regional and national importance. Local and regional interests quite naturally should take their problems to district and division offices, and I intend to do whatever I can to support that relationship. I will also focus my efforts on assuring that we are applying sound planning principles that will build and maintain strong, balanced planning programs into the future, and on building the national-level relationships that will assist your efforts in achieving local and regional partnerships.

An essential component in building strong planning and civil works programs is strategic planning. Although this responsibility is shared with civil works team members, I believe planning organizations are best suited to prepare civil works strategic plans. Each district may have its own concept of what a strategic plan should include. Whatever its shape or form, I strongly recommend all fields office put such plans in place, and that they lay the foundation for formal, detailed actions to strengthen planning and civil works programs.

What should you be looking for in building your strategic plans?

First, planning is the first step in the "planning to construction pipeline." Districts cannot expect to build healthy civil works programs without a strong planning team, one with the skills and resources to

systematically take projects all the way from inception to implementation. How healthy is your program? How strong is your pipeline? One simple indicator of a healthy planning program is the value of projects in the pipeline, i.e., under study, in design and under construction. That provides a graphic example of whether the pipeline is flowing.

Second, focus your planning program on achieving success. I understand that all reconnaissance studies will not lead to feasibility studies, and not every feasibility study will result in a project. Sound plan formulation, economic and environmental evaluation are basic ingredients. But it is every bit as important to build the relationships and partnerships necessary to secure feasibility cost sharing agreements, and ultimately move the project toward implementation. Be relentless in pursuing good projects – it's hard work, but the essence of sound planning is identifying solutions to problems *and* implementing them.

Third, fully utilize all of the Corps mission responsibilities - traditional flood protection and navigation as well as emerging environmental restoration – in building your future programs. I expect our future civil works program to include a balance of traditional and emerging missions. I also foresee greater attention to formulating projects that achieve both economic *and* environmental outputs; for example, navigation projects that beneficially use dredged material and flood protection projects that incorporate substantial natural storage.

Finally, employ all of your programs and authorities in building linkages with local clients, customers and sponsors. Every potential client, partner, and customer in your region should be familiar with your programs and authorities, and knowledgeable enough to contact you for assistance. Continuing authorities, planning assistance to states and flood plain management services are valuable programs on their own. And they take on additional importance in building relationships with our non-Federal partners and potential linkages to our general investigations program. ❖

A Word from the Editor

Harry Kitch – CECW-PD

This is another plea for those of you out in the field to send in articles on items, issues, and successes that we can share across the Corps. ❖

Building on Property Acquired Through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Ken Zwickl - CECW-PF

FEMA recently issued a memorandum to their Regional offices clarifying their existing policy and statutory requirements related to allowable open space use on land acquired as part of a "buyout" project using FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds.

The fundamental requirement for the uses on land acquired as part of a buyout project using HMGP funds is compatibility with open space, recreational, or wetlands management practices. Section 404 of the Stafford Act requires the land be maintained in perpetuity in open space uses, with the goal of allowing the natural and beneficial functions of the flood plain to be restored. Limited structures, such as restrooms and public facilities, which are open on all sides, are permitted on the acquired land.

FEMA Director James Lee Witt has stated that large flood control structures such as levees are not compatible with either open space or the nonstructural emphasis of the "acquisition" program and FEMA will not grant exceptions for such activities.

This policy does not prohibit communities from undertaking large flood control projects such as levees, but simply points out that communities which desire to construct a flood control project pursue such options through the appropriate Federal agencies and funding sources prior to undertaking an HMGP acquisition and not place such structures on HMGP acquired land. If a community does decide to undertake an acquisition project, FEMA has recommended that the applicants sign a

statement of intent with their HMGP application before project approval acknowledging that they understand the future construction limitations of the HMGP acquired property.

It is highly unlikely that FEMA will change this policy on open space use. FEMA and Corps HQ staff met to discuss this issue, and have pledged to work together on possible solutions to current problems with proposed Corps projects. One possible solution is to include specific language in the authorizing legislation for each project. What is unclear is how to solve these problems for projects being implemented under the Continuing Authorities program. What is clear is the importance of the Corps ensuring that local sponsors are aware of the deed restrictions on HMGP acquired lands so they can make informed decisions regarding HMGP acquisition proposals. ❖

58th EAB Meeting

Beverley B. Getzen - CECW-PF

PUT THIS ON YOUR CALENDARS!

The next Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) meeting, the 58th, will be hosted by SWD and SWF in Ft. Worth at the Raddison Plaza hotel. The meeting will take place 20-23 April 1999. This meeting will conclude our cycle of meetings dealing with "Watershed Perspective." Watershed technology will be the focus at this particular meeting: what tools, technologies, data gathering/data evaluation methods are now available for us to use? After hearing about what tools we already have, we then need to look ahead to what we'd like to have developed to assist further in watershed assessment and watershed management planning or implementation. There will be several new members of the Environmental Advisory Board inducted at this meeting and you'll have a chance to meet and greet the newcomers as well as see some past members whose great interest in the Corps resulted in their determination to continue to be involved even after their terms expire. When the new members are chosen, we'll let you know.

Meanwhile, keep these dates in mind and let your friends and colleagues, both in the Corps and in other agencies, know about this. We especially encourage colleagues from other Federal agencies, state and local agencies, organizations and stakeholders to join us in making this concluding meeting as useful as possible in

filling our tool kits with the very best techniques for studying and managing watersheds. Furthermore, we are eager to hear your ideas about tools and techniques to be presented or discussed as well as your ideas about the "missing links"--what do we need that we don't have available already. This is your opportunity to shape the program to meet your needs. Send your suggestions to Beverley Getzen, by e-mail or by phone [(202) 761-1980]. See you in Ft. Worth in April!

❖

Native American Culture

Paul Blakey – CECW-PC

When working with Native Americans in our planning, operations and construction projects, one should keep in mind the culture and ideas that they share. The following, is extracted from Touch the Earth - a Self-Portrait of Indian Existence, compiled by T.C. McLuhan, published by Pocket Books, New York, NY:

The occasion for this speech was an Indian council in the Valley of Walla Walla in 1855, presided over by Isaac Stevens, governor of Washington Territory, and General Palmer, superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon. Governor Steven's objectives were to set up three reservations: one for the Cayuses, the Walla-Wallas and Umatillas; a second for the Nez Perces; and a third for the Yakimas. Young Chief, of the Cayuses, opposed the treaty and grounded his objections on the fact that the Indians had no right to sell the ground which the Great Spirit had given for their support. He gave the following speech before signing away their land.

"I WONDER IF THE GROUND HAS ANYTHING TO SAY? I wonder if the ground is listening to what is said? I wonder if the ground would come alive and what is on it? Though I hear what the ground says. The ground says, It is the Great Spirit that placed me here. The Great Spirit tells me to take care of the Indians, to feed them aright. The Great Spirit appointed the roots to feed the Indians on. The water says the same thing. The Great

Spirit directs me, Feed the Indians well. The grass says the same thing, Feed the Indians well. The ground, water and grass say, The Great Spirit has given us our names. We have these names and hold these names. The ground says, The Great Spirit has placed me here to produce all that grows on me, trees and fruit. The same way the ground says, It was from me man was made. The Great Spirit, in placing men on the earth, desired them to take good care of the ground and to do each other no harm....”



Navigation Data Becomes Accessible

*Arlene L. Dietz, Director, Navigation
Data Center*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers decision makers involved in navigation projects, from the lock operator making daily management decisions to the planner and policy maker assessing regional and national needs to the program and project manager allocating funds, they all must have current, flexible, readily available, internally linked, and standardized data and statistics for timely, intelligent decision making. Collectively Corps projects supported over 2.3 billion tons of commerce in 1997; this includes 99% of the U.S. overseas foreign trade, by volume.

The Navigation Data Center (NDC), established in 1988, centralized most all national navigation related data and statistics and has successfully standardized terms; integrated information across the systems; adopted international and national standards and codes; and converted to Corps-wide compatible hardware, software and communications tailored systems. Most importantly, through user meetings, training sessions and tailored consultations, NDC attempts to become increasingly responsive to the Corps changing needs.

The individual Federal water transportation databases contain data on lock, port and waterway infrastructure; commercial U.S. vessel statistics and vessel movements; U.S. waterborne commerce, both foreign and domestic; lock operations and

performance; and dredging. You are encouraged to review the public website at www.wrsc.usace.army.mil/hdc where you can download the Users Guide; individual statistical reports; the monthly updates; order NDC=s CD-ROM and Fact Card and order copies for your office and the public. But remember this public website and CD-ROM do not contain the confidential level data, which is available to Corps users. Call to obtain the Federal Users Guide and discuss options available to you.

The Navigation Data Center will be providing monthly updates of navigation data and statistics news. Look for future articles on U.S. Foreign Waterborne Transportation Statistics Program and another on the linkage of waterborne commerce chemical groups to the International and Coast Guard hazardous material codes. In the meantime, if you have needs for detailed statistics or special computer runs for your projects, contact Charlotte Cook at 504-862-1473 (for vessel and commerce questions) or Bob Baldwin at 703-428-8047 (for all other inquiries). ❖

CLEAN WATER ACTION PLAN--Unified Watershed Assessments

Beverley B. Getzen - CECW-PF

All the states and some of the Native American tribes have completed their Unified Watershed Assessments (UWA). The summaries are available on the Cleanwater Action Plan Website: "cleanwater.gov." EPA has issued the 319 funding for this FY. The additional funding received for FY 99 (over and above funding levels of FY 98) as a result of the CWAP budget initiative is directed toward restoration of those high priority (category 1) watersheds. (Base funding is still oriented toward ongoing pollution prevention actions.) The first step for this "delta" funding in many cases is development of watershed restoration strategies. If you have the opportunity to contact your state counterparts as well as regional EPA and NRCS staff, you may discover that some opportunities exist for the Corps to offer its assistance and expertise to the watershed planning and restoration processes. The summary of the UWA's was recently furnished to each MSC and district CWAP POC so copies are available in

each office. In some cases, you may find that some of the high priority watersheds are locations at which we already have some authority, perhaps even a study or project. In other instances, we may have an opportunity to undertake some initial work under Planning Assistance to States or FPMS Technical Services, which could lead to identification of a Corps study or project.



CLEAN WATER ACTION PLAN--Federal Coordination Teams

Beverley B. Getzen - CECW-PF

One of the Key Actions (#108, p. 87) of the CWAP is the formation of a National Watershed Forum to serve as a coordinating mechanism for providing views from the non-Federal perspective. To accomplish the end, a three-pronged approach has been selected. First, the regional Federal family is being invited to form Federal Coordination Teams (FCT's) to meet and discuss programs, priorities, and issues of mutual interest and concern. Second, RFP's will be issued inviting the formation of Regional Fora to collect and represent the non-Federal family, with small grant "seed" money provided to kick this effort off. Each Forum will no doubt reach out to the regional Federal family via the FCT but could also make its views known to the Principals or the National Steering Committee. The goal is to find out what the various stakeholders' view as major issues and priorities in watershed restoration across the nation. Third, the Watershed 2001 Conference will provide the mechanism for bringing together in a major public forum all the various interested parties. The input from the FCT's and the Regional Fora will facilitate the development of the program and agenda for this conference.

Letters to various Federal Regional agency heads are on their way, asking that the initial meetings of the various FCT's be convened. The leadership for this effort varies among the Federal family, some being led by EPA, some by various agencies in DoI, some in USDA. The Corps will, in each region, be invited to participate. The initial meetings are intended to gather the top agency heads, administrators, directors, etc., in each region, so Division Commanders will be the

identified Corps regional counterpart to be invited to sit at this roundtable. (If ClubFed already exists, this can be another agenda topic of a continuing nature.)

Some of you may already be involved in a regional forum of one kind or another such as the Southwest RIST or the Southeast Regional Forum. Others of you are involved in other initiatives, which provide a forum for gathering the Federal family together. When these organizations and opportunities already exist, there is no need to create a new one, merely to augment the charter of whatever existing organization you have to include addressing Clean Water Action Plan items such as the Unified Watershed Assessment or the Unified Federal Policy. Matching watershed restoration opportunities with other programs such as American Heritage Rivers, Coastal America, Brownfields, Superfund reuses, abandoned mine land reclamation, etc., would be an ideal situation, maximizing resource commitments from various agencies at Federal, tribal, state and local levels. ❖

SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE

The deadline for material for the next issue is 26 January 1999. ❖

Planning Ahead, is an unofficial publication authorized under AR 25-30. It is published by the Planning Division, Directorate of Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 20 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20314-1000,

<http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwp/news.htm>

TEL 202-761-1969 or FAX 202-761-1972 or e-mail

Harry.E.Kitch@usace.army.mil.